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Ofakim residents block roads and demonstrate yesterday.

(Rafi Weizman/Israel Sun)

Ofakim shuts down for day to protest unemployment

LIAT COLLINS and Itim

Hundreds of angry Ofakim residents blocked traffic, burned tires and garbage bins, and clashed with police yesterday to protest the city's rising unemployment.

Stores were shut, schools were closed, and municipal services paralyzed as the town protested its jobless rate. The official rate was reported on Monday to be 14.3 percent, but locals insist the real unemployment rate is closer to 20%.

"I do not see an end to this unemployment," Mayor Micha Herman told Israel Radio. "We need to find real solutions, and it is clear that without massive help we will not be able to do so."

Leading the protests were the city's own employees, who still have not gotten their November

salaries. The Interior Ministry has acknowledged a municipal deficit of NIS 20.6 million, but says it will not cover the debt unless

Netanyahu creates emergency panel to tackle unemployment, Page 13

dozens of workers are fired, city services slashed, and property taxes raised 20 percent.

In reality, Herman said, the deficit is NIS 52m., and while the city is willing to negotiate a recovery plan, it cannot make the deep cuts and carry out the dismissals the ministry wants.

"The national tables on unem-

ployment were published, and again Ofakim leads the list. We are demanding that the prime minister come up with a special solution for Ofakim, since Ofakim is not like other towns in the country."

Police at first tried to disperse the demonstrators blocking the main roads, but then closed the road between the city and the Gilat and Magen junctions for an hour and a quarter, forcing cars that were approaching Ofakim to drive off onto dirt roads and through adjacent fields.

"Last week taxi drivers earning NIS 24,000 blocked roads in Tel Aviv for hours, and no one tried to stop them," shouted one demonstrator into a bullhorn. "We earn less than NIS 2,500, but they try to remove, because we are Ofakim and not Tel Aviv."

Meretz has filed another no-con-

fidence motion in the prime minister, citing unemployment as the main issue.

"This government lives in a bubble and doesn't heed its citizens' needs," said Meretz whip Haim Oron.

The Knesset Interior Committee held an emergency meeting on the situation in Ofakim. Herman was unable to get to the session, however, because he was busy trying to help several protesters who had been arrested.

Committee chairman Salah Tarif (Labor) described the situation in Ofakim as "a catastrophe that cannot be ignored."

Ze'ev Boim (Likud), who came to the meeting after visiting the town, said the situation there is difficult. Boim said immediate aid was required and also a program to provide jobs.

Sharon: PM is jeopardizing national security

Cabinet meets again today over redeployment

By JAY BUSHENSKY

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon accused Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday of sacrificing security interests in the quest for a pullback plan for the West Bank.

"I have always made every effort to maintain this government, but it was the right thing to do until you reached the limits of endangering national interests, and unfortunately you are about to cross that line," Sharon shouted.

He asserted that if his map was not accepted by the cabinet "there will be no basis for a government that does not relate to security interests."

"Don't wave your finger at me," Netanyahu shouted back.

Following this raucous, inconclusive session, the cabinet decided to reconvene today in its search for an interim consensus on the scope of the IDF's next withdrawal.

Netanyahu will then be able to

report on the results to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at their meeting tomorrow.

A senior government official said the participants did not focus on the percentage of territory to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority. "No percentages were

3 settler leaders threaten to topple gov't, Page 2

discussed," he said.

However, he contended that Netanyahu will be able to present Israel's redeployment plans "in general terms." He said the requisite maps will not be ready for submission to Albright and her staff.

The prime minister is not leaning toward either the map presented by the IDF or that presented by

Sharon, he said.

Asked by Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy if he intends to show Albright the maps under consideration and to discuss the percentage of territory to be relinquished, Netanyahu replied, "That is not true."

This prompted Foreign Minister David Levy to warn that "if you are not serious and don't intend to show anything to the secretary of state, I will reject your invitation to fly with you to Paris and Luxembourg."

"I don't know what is worse - for you to boycott the trip or join it," Sharon quipped.

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky expressed satisfaction that the cabinet was grappling with the strategic problems involved in carrying out a redeployment. But he regretted that it took an impending meeting with Albright for this to be given a serious airing.

See SHARON, Page 2

Anti-ALS drug omitted from basket

By JUDY SIEGEL

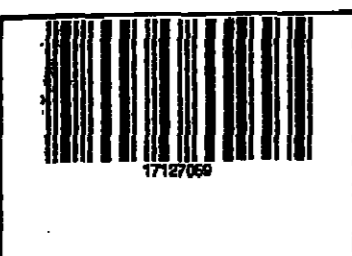
The Health Ministry is making efforts to ensure that 70 victims of Lou Gehrig's disease will get a medication that can slow their decline.

The neurological disorder, known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), affects some 200 Israelis, but nearly a third can be helped by riluzole (known commercially as Rilutek). The drug costs NIS 2,000 a month, but it was not included by the Health Ministry in the list of 14 vital drugs being added to the basket of health services.

ALS causes the wasting of muscles of the arms and legs and can spread to most of the body. It results from a breakdown of the nerves that supply the muscles where they begin - in the brain and spinal cord. There is no cure, and it can cause death within two to five years.

S.S., of Ramat Hasharon, whose ALS symptoms appeared a few years ago, called *The Jerusalem Post* to protest against the health funds' refusal to pay for the drug.

See BASKET, Page 7



Rabies claims third fatality in space of 13 months

By JUDY SIEGEL and LIAT COLLINS

A 58-year-old man from the western Galilee village of Judeida died of rabies yesterday. He is the third victim of the disease in 13 months - after three decades passed without a single case in Israel.

The man, whose identity was

not revealed, arrived at Nahariya Government Hospital a few days ago with symptoms of the incurable disease and scratches on his face and hands. He had not reported any animal bites to the authorities, and thus did not receive in time the protective vaccine that would have saved his life.

Last month a girl from

Kalansuwa died of rabies, a year after an IDF soldier died of the illness after being bitten by an unidentified animal.

Panic caused by the soldier's death has greatly increased the number of reports about encounters with suspicious animals brought to district health offices.

See RABIES, Page 7

Gil's trial opens today

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

The trial of Yehuda Gil, the senior Mossad agent charged with falsifying information, is to open in Tel Aviv District Court today. Court President Menahem Ilan and Judges Haim Porat and Uri Goren will hear the case behind closed doors.

Gil, 63, of Gedera, is being charged with giving his superiors false information about Syria's positions on the peace talks, with the intention of damaging national security. The maximum penalty for this offense, which is included in the espionage category, is 15 years in prison.

Gil, who allegedly pocketed the money intended for his Syrian "source," also is charged with theft by a civil servant and fraud.

See GIL, Page 7

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Pinhasi gets suspended sentence

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Shas MK Rafael Pinhasi was sentenced yesterday to a year's suspended sentence and fined NIS 20,000 after pleading guilty to charges of conspiracy and making a false declaration to the state comptroller regarding election campaigns.

Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court Judge Amiram Binyamini thus honored a plea bargain reached December 10, under which additional charges of keeping false corporate records, attempted fraud, and conspiring to commit a crime were dropped.

Binyamini said that in passing sentence, he had considered punishments given others for the episode, involving violations of the Party Funding Law in the 1988 Knesset elections and the local authorities elections in 1989.

The others, Yehezkel Eshayek, a former Shas secretary-general, received a 10-month suspended sentence and was fined NIS 17,500, and Shmuel David, a former Shas liaison, received a term

of public service.

Pinhasi, Eshayek and David were convicted of paying yeshiva students to work in the campaigns without recording their earnings or reporting them to the state comptroller. Their failure to report enabled the youths to avoid the draft despite the fact that they were working instead of studying.

Binyamini said that Pinhasi did not benefit personally from the funds involved, and that he had already been punished publicly by being unable to serve as a minister or deputy minister while under indictment.

Reacting to the sentence, Pinhasi said: "I feel fine. I agreed to the plea bargain to keep my family from having to suffer more than it already has for many months."

Pinhasi also maintained that other parties also failed to report all their actions to the comptroller.

The Movement for Quality Government protested the verdict as favoring a public figure, and said it planned to appeal to the



Shas MK Rafael Pinhasi (l) stands with his lawyer Aharon Shlanger in court yesterday. (Israel Sam)

Supreme Court.

"There was no equality before the law," shown in the case, a spokesman said. "Pinhasi was

convicted of a felony but was merely given a suspended sentence."

The plea bargain was upheld

earlier yesterday by Justice Tova Strassberg-Cohen who rejected the movement's petition to issue an injunction to delay the verdict.

Tension mounting over World Likud delegates' list

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

Tension is mounting in the Likud over Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's refusal to endorse the new list of delegates for the World Likud Convention.

Sallai Meridor, whom Netanyahu had declared as his candidate for Jewish Agency chairman, yesterday urged the prime minister to endorse the list that ministers Limor Livnat and Yehoshua Matza prepared at Netanyahu's request.

Meridor's plea followed the Likud tribunal's ruling the previous day that a list of delegates for the WLC be presented within 48 hours.

Unless Netanyahu endorses the new list, a previous list, which former Prime Minister's Office director-general Avigdor Lieberman submitted, will be accepted. Lieberman announced on Monday that he will run for chairman of the WLC against incumbent chairman Ronni Milo.

A storm erupted in the Likud when the first list was found to have been manipulated to give Lieberman a clear advantage over Milo. Netanyahu ordered a new list prepared, based on the original

one before it was altered, but so far is refusing to endorse it.

Netanyahu's failure to endorse the list is perceived in the Likud as cooperation with Lieberman in the power struggle against the party "princes" and "rebels," including Livnat, Milo, MKs Dan Meridor (brother to Sallai), Ze'ev Begin, Ehud Olmert and others.

Earlier this week Livnat presented the Likud tribunal with a sworn statement that the delegates' list to the WLC was distorted and changed, and that the second list of delegates was the "corrected" one ordered by the prime minister.

WLC legal advisor Yaakov Lerer warned Netanyahu he would summon him to testify before the Likud tribunal next week, unless the prime minister disqualify the first list and endorse the new one.

"The list's endorsement will be the test of whether Netanyahu is in control or whether his right hand doesn't know what the left is doing," a senior Likud source said.

Milo would not comment on the list affair, but sources close to him said he would decide whether to run for WLC chairman depending on which list is finally accepted.

Jewish journalists visit tunnel, Har Homa

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Several dozen Jewish journalists from around the world saw the sites of headline-making news up close yesterday as they visited Har Homa and the Western Wall Tunnel in the opening afternoon of the Seventh International Conference of the Jewish Media.

Phyllis Singer of Cincinnati's *The American Israelite* said that going to Har Homa gave her a chance "to understand what all the brouhaha is all about."

"I think it was important for the international Jewish journalists to see it for themselves, and understand it, and hear the explanation of the connection and why the Palestinians want it," Singer added.

Mordechai Ben-Dat of Toronto, of *The Canadian Jewish News*, called the visit to the tunnel "a completely goose-bumpy experi-

ence, breathtaking in every sense of the word...one that is difficult to conceive in one's imagination, even after reading articles about it."

Conference participants today will hold a series of discussions, including one on "Respect for Dialogue - How Can We Live Together," which is expected to focus on religious pluralism and the proposed conversion bill.

This afternoon the journalists will hear speeches by Foreign Minister David Levy and Tourism Minister Moshe Kansav. The day ends with a festive ceremony entitled "Fifty Years of Israeli Achievement," featuring performances by singer Gali Atari, the Israel Navy Entertainment Troupe and a multi-media presentation.

Some 130 journalists are participating in the week-long conference, sponsored by the World Zionist Organization.

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RUSSIAN PRESS REVIEW

By YOSEF BEGUN

Citizens lose out

The general opinion of the Russian press regarding the recent strike was expressed by Ilan Kfir in *24 Hours*. "Amir Peretz claims 'I won.' Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman counters that 'the state has won the victory.'" Says Kfir, "I won't enter into this futile argument because I know exactly who has lost - we, the ordinary citizens of Israel."

George Mordel of *Vremya* writes, "The agreement between [former finance minister Avraham] Shohat and Peretz was handwritten on a sheet of yellow paper. It was not approved by the government; it was not voted on in the Knesset. Therefore, from the point of view of the lawyer Neeman and the Supreme Court, the paper is not valid. The chairman of the Histadrut, as well as of the Labor Party, know the value of the paper but keep insisting that the government fulfill the agreement."

Yuri Cohen writes in *Novosti Nedeli* that the real goal of the strike was to undermine Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government. At the same time, Cohen points out the failure of the government to force the union leaders to carry out the court decision to end the strike. MK Annon Rubinstein (Meretz), who writes regularly in *Vesti*, says the Histadrut's crucial mistake was to paralyze the air and seaports. Its second blunder was to defy the court order. The setting of such a precedent will have irreversible consequences.

Saraphobia

Vesti and *Novosti Nedeli* both mentioned that an article sharply criticizing the prime minister's wife appeared in *Yediot Aharonot*, but neither newspaper commented on it.

The weekly *Globus* devoted much space to the issue. Ilan Kfir writes, "The article in *Yediot Aharonot* is only the tip of the iceberg. The prime minister found himself in a predicament, but so did the entire nation. It is hard to believe that such a woman, through the prime minister, can influence the events in the country, but such is the case." Rivka Rabinovich of *Vremya* is of the same opinion. "It concerns us too, Mr. Netanyahu," she says. She reports that in a radio interview, Civil Service

Commissioner Shmuel Hollander discussed the problem of the rights and obligations of the wife of a prime minister. Says Rabinovich, "I hope it will be solved before the next scandal."

In the same newspaper, Zoya Klirskaya criticizes Netanyahu for sending the indignant letter to *Yediot* and cancelling his subscription. "The actions of an enraged husband make him look ridiculous. That is the greatest hazard for a major politician."

Says Leo Malinsky in *Nasha Strana*, "The article is shameful. Why didn't they write about the unbalanced wife of some surgeon, who has less influence on the work of her spouse? The fact that Sara threw a shoe at her husband will not affect the scope of the second stage of redeployment. The implication of this insolent publication is that if Bibi cannot manage his wife, he cannot manage the country. Leave Sara alone. Don't you already have your hands full with Bibi?"

Material world

The discussion in the Russian press about the future of the local textile industry was sparked by the decision to shut down textile factories in Nazareth Illit and Kfar Sava.

In interviews with Ganor and Shamir in *Novosti Nedeli* and with Alexander Auerbach in *Vesti*, Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky said that the closure of the factories is a natural thing. "The conditions of the market economy in the modern world do not call for sentiment. The main principle is expediency. When an enterprise is not competitive, it must be closed down." Sharansky asserts that it is more profitable to invest in businesses that are interested in hi-tech and in upgrading their employees.

Yisrael Ba'aliya

Vesti published a report by Alex Pritulsky about an alleged event in the Yisrael Ba'aliya party. He claims that Sharansky suggested that MKs Yuri Stern, Michael Nudelman, and another unnamed MK leave the party and set up an independent faction. No source was named. Pritulsky says that Sharansky's press attache, Stern, and MK Maria Solodkin deny the allegation.

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US Conservatives hint at differences with Reform in memo:

Register halachic conversions

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK - The American Conservative movement, in a memo that alludes to its differences with its Reform counterpart, has called for the registration of all conversions in Israel that meet "halachic criteria." The Conservatives' memo came two weeks after the American Reform leadership issued a report in which it suggested that the Neeman Committee seek an administrative solution for conversions because the "model" for interdenominational compromise lacks the good will to succeed.

Unlike the Reform report, the Conservative memo said it did not want to set any "bottom line" conditions for the Neeman Committee, which is charged with reaching a compromise on conversion by January 31. However, the memo said, "it would be impossible to accept any process that does not provide for the registration of all conversions in Israel that meet halachic criteria."

The memo, which was released this week, was written by the directors of the movement's rabbinical and congregational wings: Rabbi Joel Meyers of the Rabbinical Assembly, and Rabbi Jerome Epstein of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. They cautioned that although the Conservative movement in the Diaspora has a "vital role to play in the fight for pluralism, it is important to remember that we are, in fact, seeking recognition for our fellow Jews in the Masorti (Conservative) movement in Israel."

Sharansky backs Neeman proposal

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Israel must have a mutually acceptable definition of conversion to Judaism, Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky said yesterday. Sharansky was speaking at an international conference on Pluralism and Religious Liberty at the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem, sponsored by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. The Becket Fund, which is often opposed to such US Jewish groups as the American Jewish Congress and American Jewish Committee, has provided legal support for a wide range of issues in the US, including a New Jersey mayor who which wanted to have both a hanukkah and a Christmas creche and a bus company which allowed a hassidic group to set up a *mezuzah*. Sharansky said that while he favored full freedom of religious expression for Jews and non-Jews, the issue of conversion was one which needed a political resolution. "We have to guarantee pluralism to every person, Jew, Christian or Moslem, and to every person who belongs to a different group within Judaism, but at the same time we must have a common political denominator of who is Jewish," Sharansky said.

He said the best possible solution is the Neeman Committee's proposal, which Sharansky described as one in which all streams of Judaism would teach prospective converts, but the conversion itself would take place under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate. However Rabbi David Rosen, Israel director of the ADL, predicted the Neeman Committee would not succeed in putting forward an acceptable proposal, because most of those in the rabbinical establishment were unwilling to relinquish their monopoly. Rosen noted that Sharansky had said he did not believe the new Russian law recognizing only a four official religious groups would survive, because the human spirit could not be suppressed. However, Rosen said, this same principle would serve to break the Chief Rabbinate's monopoly in Israel.

The Israeli-American distinction seemed especially significant, in part, because the differences between Israeli and American practices have sown confusion among the Conservative rabbis and laity about their alliance with Reform, Meyers said. The Conservative movement has had to explain why it advocates that Israel accept practices that it finds untenable. It does not routinely accept Reform conversions, which tend to be viewed as "incomplete," and does not accept the Reform doctrine of patrilineal descent. "The issue is not so much practice as openness to different practices," Meyers said.

Gasoline prices drop

Gasoline prices dropped last night at midnight, and 96 octane now costs NIS 3.31 a liter, down 0.9 percent, and 95 octane NIS 3.32 a liter, down 0.6%. Diesel fuel dropped 9.4% and heating oil costs 10.02% less. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Airbus offers to increase purchases in Israel

In an apparent last-minute effort to sway El Al, Airbus is considering increasing its commitment to buy equipment in Israel. John Leabey, Airbus marketing vice president, announced the move following a flying 12-hour visit yesterday. Haim Hacham, director of Teshet, which represents Airbus in Israel, said the company was seeking potential Israeli producers. The announcement came as the tension increased over El Al's choice for a \$200 million deal to acquire five additional medium-range aircraft, from either Airbus or Boeing, the company which has supplied all El Al aircraft in recent years. The El Al acquisition commission, headed by Amos Lapidot, is to make its recommendation shortly before the company's board is to meet tomorrow. *Haim Shapiro*

Schools spending up 3-4% a year

Despite all the talk about cuts in the Education Ministry Israel increased spending on schooling by 3-4% per capita each year between 1992-96. According to Central Bureau of Statistics data released yesterday, the increase was 5-6% a year between 1995-96. A comparison with other developed countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows that while in Israel school expenditures were 8.9% of gross domestic product, other countries averaged about 6.2%. Turkey was last on the list with 4.1%, while the US came in at 6.8%. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Compromise on burial still being sought

The High Court of Justice gave the Moslem and Jewish families of Shuakat Kuza, who died nearly two weeks ago but has not been buried, until tomorrow to work out a compromise on whether he will be interred as a Jew or a Moslem. Kuza, born a Moslem, lived for 30 years to a Jewish woman and converted three years ago to marry her. But soon after that, he left his Jewish wife without divorcing her, reverted to Islam, and married a Moslem woman. After he died, each woman demanded that he be buried according to her religion, and they took the case to the High Court. A compromise, whereby he would be buried in the Moslem cemetery in Haifa but right near the Jewish section, with two separate ceremonies, has not been finalized, apparently because of an unresolved monetary dispute. *Itim*

Court temporarily halts demolition of mosque

Lod Magistrate's Court yesterday issued a temporary injunction against the Lod Municipality and the regional planning commission to stop them from demolishing a new mosque in the Pardess Shuir quarter. According to Beduin's Rights Association chairman Nuri el-Okbi, the Moslems of the town, many of whom are Beduin from the Negev who were resettled by the government in the 1950s, had formerly prayed in a temporary structure. When this was replaced with the present modern building, the municipality and planning commission said it was illegal. The order is to remain in force until Monday, when the court is to hear the case. *Haim Shapiro*

Transport Ministry warns vehicle testing stations

The Transport Ministry warned yesterday that it intends to cancel the licenses of vehicle testing stations which passed vehicles that were not road-worthy. The warning comes in the wake of police findings that there are many such vehicles on the road. Ministry deputy director-general for traffic Zvi Yuzent yesterday asked Cmdr. Ya'acov Ganot, head of the police traffic division, to turn over his findings so that the offenders can be investigated. Ministry Director-General Nahum Langemal said that a new 25-person inspection team has been set up to keep watch over the testing stations. *Haim Shapiro*

Man emerges from coma, gets matriculation

Despite being classified as a "vegetable" for 18 months, Efraim Butrashvili, 25, a graduate of the Ashdod Comprehensive High School, has gained his matriculation certificate, with an average grade of 90. Butrashvili suffered severe injuries in a car accident while in 12th grade, in the midst of preparing for his matriculation exams. *Aryeh Dean Cohen and Judy Siegel*

Teachers step up sanctions today

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Teachers' sanctions will be widened today as the Secondary School Teachers Association joins the Histadrut Teachers Union in preventing extracurricular activities.

The association is to resume the sanctions it had suspended last month for a three-week period, during which it had hoped a deal could be worked out with the Treasury relating to payment for work done outside the schools, such as accompanying school trips, and on principals' wages. Those pupils who left on school trips earlier this week were to be brought back to school last night if no solution was found.

The teachers will not permit any after-school cultural activities either in or out of schools. School principals are also to cut contacts with the ministry on pedagogic and administrative matters. Principals and teachers have also been instructed not to cooperate with ministry inspectors, counselors or other ministry representatives.

Yesterday, school trips and cultural events in elementary schools and some junior high and high schools did not take place as the Histadrut Teachers Union imposed sanctions. Teachers also refrained from participating in teachers' meetings and meetings with parents. A spokeswoman for the association said there was currently "no contact" with the Finance Ministry about the dispute.

"If there was any kind of contact, we wouldn't put a time limit on the talks. But since nothing is happening, we're renewing the sanctions," she said. She said that even though the Knesset Education Committee had thrown its support behind the teachers' demands, "the Finance Ministry apparently just isn't ready to give us more at this point."



Social workers protest budget cuts. Social workers protest against plans to cut aid to troubled youth and other weak sectors in the 1998 budget at a demonstration opposite the Treasury yesterday. Hundreds of social workers from around the country showed up to protest, despite the pouring rain. The sign in front reads, 'Children are in danger! It's an embarrassment to the nation.' (Isaac Huzari)

Hammer suggests help for children of jobless

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer yesterday suggested asking the foundation that deals with unbequeathed estates (Keren Ha'izvnot) to allocate funds to help pupils whose parents are unemployed.

Education Ministry officials said that millions of shekels are needed for this purpose. Ministry Director-General Benzion Dell said that there are thousands of pupils whose parents are unemployed and who are having trouble coping in school. "A family economic crisis also impacts directly on the children's education," he said.

He called on principals, home room teachers, and kindergarten teachers to be sensitive to the issue, and noted that it is forbidden to ban such children from school events if their parents cannot afford to pay.

He also noted that Hammer had stipulated that the level of unemployment in towns should be a major criteria for determining where the long school day, scheduled to begin on January 1, should be instituted first. The money from the foundation is to be used for lending books and school bags to needy children, to pay for summer camps, school trips and other activities. Meanwhile, the Knesset Education Committee discussed ways education could be used to combat poverty.

Accident results in warning about 'go-peds'

By JUDY SIEGEL

A 14-year-old was severely injured yesterday when his "go-ped," a motorized two-wheel scooter, was involved in a collision with a car. Doctors at the Schneider Children's Medical Center for Israel in Petah Tikva said that the young victim was rushed to the emergency room in a coma, with broken legs that needed surgery.

The doctors said that go-peds, *korkinet* in Hebrew, are very dangerous when in traffic, as the driver is completely exposed to injury. Its gasoline motor allows it to reach speeds of up to 35 kilometers per hour.

Riding it requires much skill, as well as wearing a protective helmet, knee and elbow protectors, gloves, and sports shoes. Go-ped riders are not required to have a license. According to the hospital, the manufacturer warns against riding a go-ped in heavy traffic. "Therefore, there is no place for it on urban streets, the hospital spokeswoman said.

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Persian breeze in the Gulf

Iran has not made one single gesture to the West since the revolution, said Henry Kissinger recently. The gesture has come now, but what are we to make of it? It is no great surprise that the new president Mohammed Khatami wants to open a dialogue with the US. It has been clear from his May election victory that he is from a new breed of Iranian cleric appealing to an old type of Iranian voter - the one that wants more political, economic and cultural freedom.

Before last week's Islamic summit in Teheran, senior diplomats told us it would be a watershed for the Middle East. They said it would shift attention from the "New Middle East" concepts of an ossified peace process to a new balance of power in which Iran would play a weighty part.

They were right. Although the final conference resolution surprised many experts with its consensual moderation, there remained an undercurrent of anger and bitterness among the Arab delegates for the failed peace process. While everyone was reasonably polite to Yasser Arafat, a brawl between Iranian security guards and his minders provided a little vignette of the contempt for the Palestinians in Iran.



Thomas O'Dwyer

Column One

American lake The slogan in action means Khatami believes international isolation is not good for his country. So he at once moved to improve relations with his neighbors across the Gulf.

Former president Ali Akbar Rafsanjani had made half-hearted efforts to do the same, but he had become weary after his years of battling the fundamentalists and his bid to sign a security pact with the Gulf Cooperation Council came to nothing. "Arab neighbors have no problems," Rafsanjani said. "The main obstacle is the United States and Britain." This curious attitude to the West is not simply hostile Islamic sloganeering; it reflects a mindset in post-revolutionary Iran based on its perception that the Gulf - formerly the Persian Gulf - has become the American Gulf.

Whatever its regime, Iran has for most of history regarded itself as the dominant power in its region. It is right of course, no strategic equation can be calculated without taking account of that great unbroken Iranian coastline from the Shatt-al-Arab to the Strait of Hormuz.

Looking out from Iran's Bandar Abbas naval base through Iranian eyes, it would seem the Gulf - oil tanker alley - is run by the American Navy, aided by the British, and facilitated by a compliant GCC. It is not just the jealousy of a former power for the alien new order. Iran's entire economy depends on the Gulf - especially its oil and gas production and its shipping.

Up the creek Toward the end of the Iran-Iraq War Iran was all but blocked by Iraq and the Americans because of its war attacks on tanker traffic. It may have been picturesque to see the giant Iranian sailing dhows unloading carpets, copper, spices, and pistachios in the creek of Dubai, but it brought home to the most casual observer that the importance of the Gulf to Iran is as ancient as the dhows and smugglers that run its coast.

This was a theme taken up by Ayatollah Khamenei in his hard-line speech to the conference - that US warships in the Gulf are "a major source of insecurity in the region." In that historic light, Khatami's moderate language was all the more interesting. He called for more "accountability" from Khamenei's clerics, demanding performance before piety.

And while he also criticized the West he added: "We should never be oblivious to judicious acquisition of the positive accomplishments of the Western civil society." Imagine Ayatollah Khomeini saying that - or allowing it to be said.

Separate states Apart from the obligatory swipe at Israel, the conference declaration made no mention of the peace process, despite heated debates on the issue, opting for Khatami's strategy of Islamic cooperation rather than confrontation. Notably absent from the cooperation formula was the Iranian domestic scene, the speeches by spiritual leader Ali Khamenei and Khatami could have been from two leaders of separate and radically opposed states. That delineates the battlefield for the future of Iranian foreign policy. Khatami has chosen to outflank the mullahs by going directly to Iran's once hostile Arab neighbors and to liberal opinion in Europe and the US. Of course, any gesture to Israel would be a step too far at this stage, but in the long term, and assuming the Khatami forces are victorious, such a mood change cannot be ruled out. Khatami's statement that while Iran is opposed to the peace process it will not take direct action against it, could be read as a hint to Israel rather than any gesture to the dead duck of Oslo.

Since his landslide election which shocked the mullahs from the Ayatollah Khomeini school of intransigence, Khatami has clearly indicated his drift. Who would have believed an Iranian cleric would have the gall to travel the country on the back of a slogan for "Iran first, Islam second."

Iran's shaky glasnost

President Khatami's diplomatic moderation is coupled with a cultural liberalization which is anathema to hard-line clerics

By JOHN LANCASTER

TEHRAN, Iran — Four years ago, Iranian cultural authorities slapped a ban on the work of Tahmineh Milani, one of the country's best-known filmmakers. Her offense? A female character had appeared in one of her films without the traditional Moslem head scarf. The character was eight years old.

But things are looking up for Milani and, some say, for Iran. Last month, the Ministry of Islamic Guidance unexpectedly removed her from its list of banned artists, freeing her to resume her career.

"I am very optimistic," said Milani, 37, a stylish, outspoken woman who lives with her architect husband and their 18-month-old daughter in a high-rise apartment decorated with Persian carpets and abstract art. "I think people have more freedom of speech. They have more self-confidence." Expanded cultural freedom is perhaps the most striking example of how life in Iran is changing under President Mohammed Khatami, a moderate cleric who last May won a landslide victory over the candidate of the hard-line religious establishment that has ruled Iran since its 1979 Islamic revolution. Books have been unbanned, censorship eased, and licenses granted to newspapers and magazines whose publishers had previously been considered suspect.

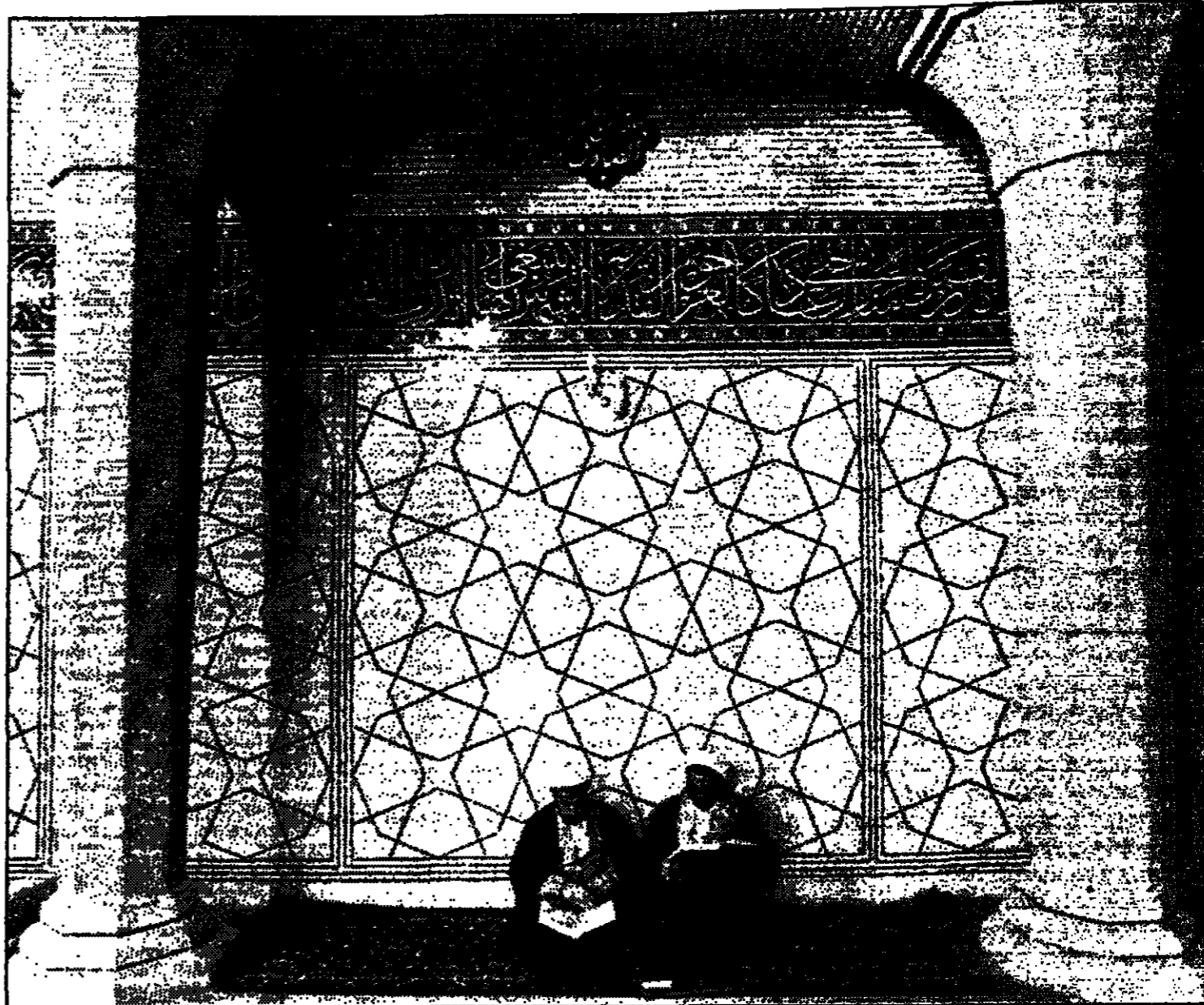
In academic circles, there is even talk of the need for improved relations with the United States, which has no diplomatic ties with Iran and is still referred to in official news media here as "the global arrogance." One of the most vivid demonstrations of the new mood occurred last month when millions of Iranians poured into the streets of the capital to celebrate the upset World Cup-qualifying victory of the Iranian national soccer team over Australia.

As police looked on helplessly, young people danced in the streets, honked their horns and blasted music from car stereos; some women even shed their mandatory head scarfs.

"This is what I call a soccer revolution," said a foreign diplomat who walked home that night through jubilant crowds. "All the streets were blocked with people...They have set the ball rolling for this closed society." But Iran's transformation is far from complete - and may yet be reversed.

By most reckonings, Khatami ranks third in the Iranian political hierarchy, behind former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who heads a powerful advisory council, and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, an arch-conservative who is supreme spiritual leader and controls security services and foreign policy. Khatami's allies still hold sway in parliament, where they recently initiated the corruption trial of Tehran's popular mayor, Gholam Hossein Karabashi, a skilled municipal manager and one of Khatami's closest political allies.

A backlash is also developing among the powerful volunteer



Studying the Koran in the holy city of Qom. Iranians and foreigners wonder how much power Khatami really wields.

morality police known as *baseji*. Although chastened by Khatami's victory - attributed in part to his emphasis on the rule of law - the *baseji* have resumed their arbitrary ways, raiding mixed-sex parties and, in October, shutting down a folk concert in the city of Arak that had been sanctioned by the provincial government.

The deepening power struggle erupted into public view last Tuesday, when Khatami and Khatami offered starkly contrasting views on relations between Islam and the West in opening speeches at a summit of leaders of Muslim states. Khatami's speech was laced with anti-Western venom; Khatami called for dialogue and understanding.

Compounding Khatami's challenges are dire economic problems, including stagnant wages, rising prices and failure to produce jobs for a labor force that is growing at an estimated annual rate of 4.5 percent.

Given the high expectations that attended his unforeseen victory in May, Khatami's failure to curb the *baseji* and improve the material well-being of Iranians after 100 days in office has disappointed many supporters.

"I don't think he can do anything because he's one person against

everyone else," said a 21-year-old man in blue jeans and Doc Marten boots who identified himself only by the initials B.N. "And anyway," he added, "he's a mullah." B.N., who lives in affluent North Tehran and works for his father's textile company, was speaking outside a pizzeria that is a popular hangout for well-to-do young people - and, as such, a favorite target of the *baseji*.

He has reason to feel bitter. Last month, he said, he was arrested in a *baseji* raid on a private party, jailed for two days and then flogged with 40 lashes after a perfunctory trial.

"There were barely any drinks," he said. "No one was high. It was just music and boys and girls dancing." Given the pervasiveness of such complaints, it is easy to forget that the toppling of US-backed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1979 enjoyed broad public support. Many Iranians were outraged by the shah's disdain for traditional Shiite Muslim leaders and his eager embrace of Western culture. But clerical leaders' failure to solve the country's economic problems or to ease restrictions on personal freedom has generated public anger, especially among women and those too young to remember the revolution.

Their support was crucial to Khatami's success, and many continue to view him as a potential savior. That view was largely borne out in an afternoon of conversations recently with young people in Jamshideh Park as they strolled on stone footpaths that cling to a mountainside amid cedar groves and meticulously landscaped rock gardens.

Arezoou, 19, for example, resents conservative mullahs at Tehran University, where she studies computer science by default. She said her application to study education was turned down because she prefers to wear blue jeans and a knee-length overcoat rather than the billowy black robe, or *chador*, favored by the mullahs.

And although she acknowledges that little has changed since Khatami was elected, she said she has not given up hope. "Mr. Khatami is very popular among the students," she said. "We'll just have to wait and see... It takes time to implement." A companion, Gaelareh, 17, agreed. "He gets into our hearts," she said. "Yes, there will be change, but it takes a long time."

One factor that clearly works to Khatami's advantage is his effacing style. In contrast to Rafsanjani and Khamenei, he

eschews motorcades and has ordered that his picture not be displayed in government buildings. He travels widely in Iran, touring schools and supermarkets and talking over the heads of rival politicians in direct encounters with ordinary Iranians.

"It's curious, but people don't like to blame him," said Tehran University political scientist Sadiq Zibakalam.

For now, the biggest changes have occurred in the cultural sphere.

Novelist Mahmoud Doelatabadi, for example, recently learned that his 10-volume epic, *Kelidar*, has been released for distribution after a four-year ban. Also slated to appear shortly in Iranian bookstores is a study of Western literature put out by the magazine *Kelk*. The previous government had refused to allow publication because it quoted allegedly pornographic work of D.H. Lawrence.

"They gave us permission," but they told us, "When you're publishing this book, just do it in a discreet manner," said Ali Debashti, 39, the magazine's editor in chief. "After the election, we can feel that the Iranian people have no more fear and that they can affect their own fate... We're very hopeful." (The Washington Post)

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By Batsheva Mink and David Brauner

Tons of onions and lots of shallots

Today we get down to the mucky-gritty of vegetable gardening. As we mentioned last week, even a small 3 m. x 3 m. patch is enough space to supply an average family with a surprising quantity of basic vegetables.

Winter vegetables are quite easy to grow. They generally take care of themselves, though occasional weeding is in order to keep things tidy.

Few gardeners are blessed with perfect soil. The challenge is how to improve the ground without spending a fortune.

You can start your soil-enrichment program by making a compost heap. All kinds of decayed vegetable matter may be used. Outer leaves of cabbage and lettuce, grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable peelings, etc. all make fine compost.

Avoid woody materials, animal matter (e.g., fish bones, etc.) and cooked foods, as these attract rodents and insects. Also, do not use anything that was sprayed with a herbicide (weed killer) or insecticide.

Turn over your compost with a shovel from time to time to speed up the rotting process. Letting compost dry out slows things down, so keep it wet for the decaying process to do its work. While you wait for your compost heap to fully "ripen," you may have to buy some compost from a garden center.

Turn over the soil of your plot thoroughly, digging in your compost as you go. The deeper you dig, the better your vegetables will grow. Then level the surface off nicely with a rake.

Now that we've entered the wet season, the watering requirements for the winter vegetables we describe below are minimal. You may need to top them up with an occasional burst of water during a dry spell between rains. And, of course, you must always water any vegetables (or flowers, for that matter) when you sow or plant, to start them off.

Gardening is like an iceberg - most of it is below the surface. In other words, people are not aware of most of the hard work, and what they see on top - the results - is only the smallest part.

ONIONS (*Allium cepa*; Family Alliaceae; Heb. *batzal*)

True onions are biennials, producing a bulb at the end of their first year, which is when we harvest them. However, the habit of biennialism is easily disturbed. In adverse weather conditions, there is a tendency to send up a seed-head (flower) prematurely, thus spoiling the plant as a vegetable.

Onions are highly responsive to the length of the day. While days are short in winter, they produce leaves and roots. But as soon as the daylight hours number 15, the onion concentrates on bulb formation.

Onions need deep, cool soil; moist, but not too wet. Also, the soil should not be too light (sandy) or too heavy (clay-like). The ground should be rich with plenty of compost, as onions are "greedy eaters."

Avoid using excessive nitrogen, as it will encourage the plants to continue to send out leaf growth when they should be turning to bulb (onion) formation. This in turn may cause them to run to seed, known as "bolting," or to become "thick necked" - that is, mostly sprout and little bulb.

An open, completely sunny position - no shade, if possible - is most suitable. If you are short of space in full sun, you can try growing onions under a tree that loses its leaves in the winter. By the time the leaves reappear in spring, the crop should be ready to harvest.

Sow onion seeds in drills - small furrows - spaced about 15 cm. apart. Thin out the young plants as they grow, and use the thinnings for spring onions.

If you are fortunate to find onion "sets" - that is, dwarf onion bulbs raised for the purpose of growing onions quickly - all the better. Spacing them about 18 cm. apart, press these into the surface of the rows spaced about 30 cm. apart.

Leave your onions in the ground until their tops turn yellow and die. This process can be speeded up by bending the tops over at the neck. Pull up the onions and allow them to dry on the ground. Only when the roots and leaves have completely dried and shriveled can they be put into storage.

LETTUCE (*Lactuca sativa*; Heb. *hassa*)

Lettuce is an annual salad vegetable, rich in vitamins, which can be grown all year round. Sow the seeds directly into the ground in drills about one cm. deep and cover lightly. Sowings should be staggered about every two weeks to maintain a constant supply.

If the ground is not ready when you want to plant, lettuce seeds can be sown in pots and transplanted later on. Transplanting is possible when lettuces reach 5-10 cm. high. Plant between 30 and 40 cm. apart each way.

When your lettuces start growing, thin them out. Crowding stunts their growth, encourages pests and may also make them "bolt." With lettuce, bolting, or going to seed, means that the plant sends up a long shoot with flowers, which eventually produce seeds. Bolting also results in bitter, inedible leaves.

Lettuces should be grown as quickly as possible. In hot weather they must be well watered. Lack of water is another cause of bolting. Cut lettuces as soon as they reach maturity. It is best to cut them early in the morning when the dew is on the leaves.

Gardeners living in areas where frost and icy wintry winds are prevalent must give their lettuce some protection. Erecting clear plastic "tunnels" over the drills is an excellent solution.

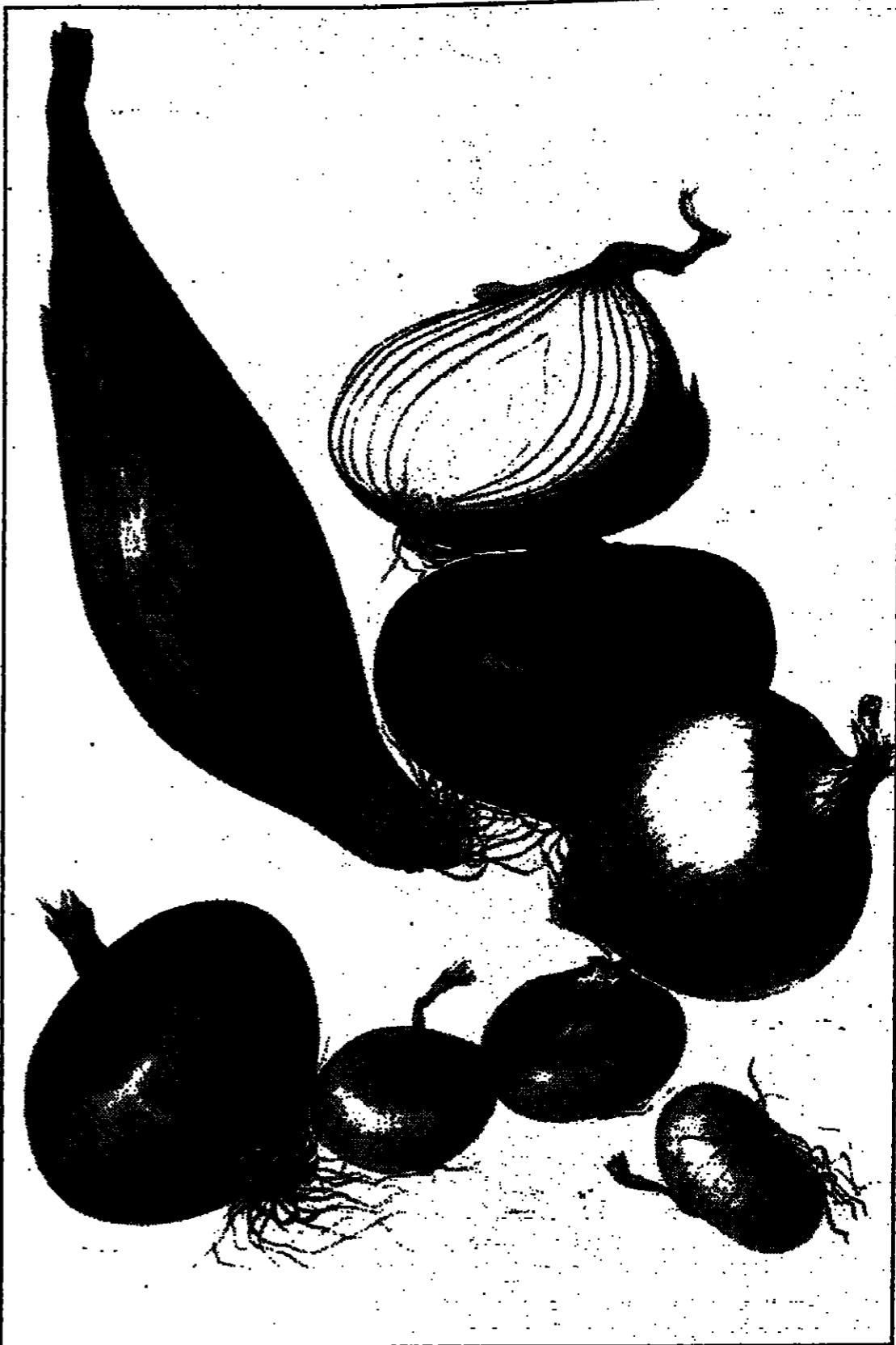
CARROTS (*Daucus carota*; Heb. *gezer*)

Edible carrots are descended from the wild carrot (Umbelliferae), a poisonous member of the parsley family. Though in fact a biennial, the carrot plant is treated as an annual, grown for its sweet-tasting taproot.

Carrots vary considerably in length and habit of growth, depending on their variety. Quick-growing "young carrot" varieties are more suitable for home gardeners because these need less care and water than the larger, long-rooted kinds. Also, young carrots are far superior in taste to large carrots; however, the younger kinds do not store as well as the long-rooted varieties.

All carrots grow best in lightish (sandy), stone-free, free-draining soil which has been composted from a previous crop. In other words, carrots do not like to come into contact with fresh compost but rather with compost that was added to the soil for earlier crop, for example, runner beans. Very rich soil encourages carrots to "fork," thus making many small taproots per plant instead of one.

A complete fertilizer high in potash worked into the soil about 2 cm. deep is recommended.



For regular supplies of tasty young carrots, sow the seeds at two-week intervals from early September to early April. Sow in drills 2 cm. deep and fill in with a mixture of soil and peat moss, making sure the bed is level. Run the rows about 15 cm. apart and thin out the seedlings until they are about 12 cm. apart.

SHALLOTS (*Allium ascalonicum*; Heb. *betzaltzi*)

As the Latin name suggests, this small edible bulb, prized by chefs the world over, is a native of the Ashkelon region. In fact, the English words "shallot" and "scallion" are derived from Old French corruptions of the name Ashkelon.

We have seen shallots for sale in some garden centers, as well as in a few larger supermarkets. They are just starting to make their appearance here. It is possible to get 10-20 shallots from a single plant, depending on how it is grown.

Instead of producing a single bulb, the shallot brings out clusters of bulbs somewhat similar to garlic. Shallots can be grown from seed, but planting the "bulblets" is more common. Plant them 9 cm. apart, with 15 cm. between rows. The conditions needed for growing shallots are similar to those of true onions.

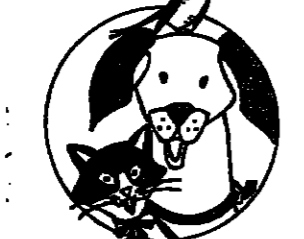
Shallots produce more leaf than onions do, and their bushy top growth makes weeding between the plants and rows more difficult. Harvest in the same way as we

describe for onions, then separate the clusters to ensure complete drying. Once they are dry, store shallots in the same way as onions. Remember to save a few bulbs for next year's planting.

Your gardening questions and comments are welcome. Contact Batsheva Mink, P.O.B. 3943, Jerusalem 91039, or David Brauner, e-mail: morrh@ashurcc.hin.ac.il



Heads 'N' Tails



By D'vora Ben Shaul

Noise can be an animal's pet peeve

Compared to our pets we humans are, if not hearing impaired, at least practically tone deaf. Dogs and cats hear much more than we do, and with greater acuity. They hear a range of sounds that are inaudible to us, and they have a greater ability to separate out a particular sound from a multitude of noises.

What's more, sounds mean different things to different species. The reaction of a dog or a cat may be far different from our own, and a dog's reaction may differ greatly from that of a cat when both hear the same sound.

We cannot know for certain just what an animal hears or how it interprets the sound, but from behavioral patterns we can see that they respond in different ways.

A reader recently reported that his cat always leaps onto the rim of the bathtub whenever he begins to run the water. The cat becomes agitated and emits a series of yowls as long as the water is swirling down the drain. It stops the minute the sound of the escaping water disappears. The reader says these yowls are specific to this situation and do not resemble any other sound the animal makes.

The same is true of many dogs that become agitated by what we

consider music. They will howl at certain notes and run away when others are played. This varies in different dogs but is shared by many. I once had a dog that got completely hysterical whenever I played the harmonica. While most people found the music pleasant, the dog would begin to bark in great agitation and even try to grab the harmonica with its mouth. I have no idea what these strange wails of mine represented to the dog, but they definitely disturbed him.

It also appears that cats' powers of vocalization are far greater than one would imagine. A blind musician once claimed that he could identify more than 100 different sounds his cat made. At one time this may have seemed far fetched to most people, but modern voice-print techniques have proven that the range of sounds a cat can produce is far greater than was formerly thought.

All of this must mean that dogs and cats, forced to live in the modern world, must feel they are surrounded by an almost unbearable din. Some animal behaviorists have even suggested that the so-called neurotic behavior of some house pets is actually a reaction to noise stress.



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The Business Scene

By Greer Fay Cashman



Finance Minister Yashov Neuman (left) and Communications Minister Lior Hareli (right)...

Finance Minister Yashov Neuman (left) and Communications Minister Lior Hareli (right)...

After recovering strongly following the Hong Kong shock, the markets are in some turmoil again...

While there was a general uncertainty about the fallout from Hong Kong in the West...

Orbotech, which makes inspection equipment for the semiconductor industry...

Investment firms have responded in kind. Lehman Brothers lowered its rating for EFI to 'neutral'...

Playing it cool

Topsy-turvy markets can result in good bargains

denly worth 35% of what it was worth Thursday...



The TASE has actually been hit less hard than foreign exchanges. There's less technology around...

So I think that unless US stocks recover pretty smartly, we are going to see more pain in the local market...

Another anomaly this past week has been the lack of impact from Europe's banking mega-merger...

My sense is that there is a lack of discrimination among investors and a degree of overreaction.

PERSONAL FINANCE

by short-term debt. In addition, the rapid liberalization of the economy meant that capital flows...

At the first signs of trouble, money rapidly flowed out, exacerbating the liquidity shortage...

While I still believe the shekel is due to weaken significantly before we're too much older...

I'm going to stay on the sidelines for another couple of weeks. I think there will be some slightly better bargains in that time...

Japan okays \$76.9 billion financial plan

By KYOKO KIMURA

Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party approved plans to raise up to \$76.9 billion to support the financial industry and cut taxes to spur growth.

The measures are part of the party's efforts to revive an economy that saw the failures of two banks and two brokerages last month.

Still, shares of banks rose after the party yesterday released details of its plan aimed at the ailing financial industry.

Support for the plan rose following the recent failures of Hokkaido Tokai Bank Ltd. a nationwide lender...

Japanese banks and brokerages have seen borrowing costs rise following the November failures.

The market's welcoming the LDP's financial stabilization measures, and bank shares were bought on that...

The party proposed a 3 percentage-point cut in the national corporate tax rate from 37.5% and a 1 percentage-point cut in local corporate taxes from 6-12%.

NEIL'S PORTFOLIO table with columns for Fund Name, No. of shares, Cost/basis, Total cost, Current price, and Current value. Includes sections for Conservative, Aggressive, and Defensive funds.

MUTUAL FUNDS

Mutual Funds table with columns for Fund Name, Unit Cost, Redemption Price, Monthly Yield, and 1997 Yield. Includes sections for FLEXIBLE, SHARES, and STATE BONDS.

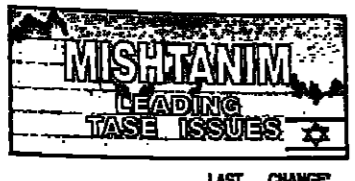
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Mutual Funds table with columns for Fund Name, Unit Cost, Redemption Price, Monthly Yield, and 1997 Yield. Includes sections for FOREIGN CURRENCY and MIXED.

Mutual Funds table with columns for Fund Name, Unit Cost, Redemption Price, Monthly Yield, and 1997 Yield. Includes sections for FOREIGN CURRENCY and MIXED.

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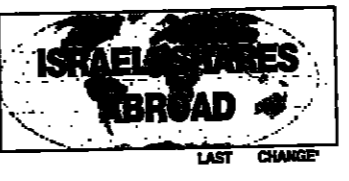
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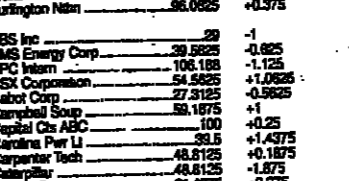
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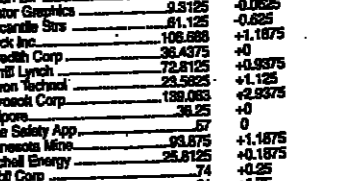
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TASE mixed on Asian concern

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Includes Tase-Mix, Tase-Mix, Tase-Mix, etc.

Table with columns: Foreign Exchange Rates, Last, Change. Includes USDollar, EUR, GBP, etc.

Table with columns: New York Market Indexes, Last, Change. Includes DJ Industrial, S&P 500, etc.

Table with columns: Other Market Indexes, Last, Change. Includes FTSE 100, Nikkei, etc.

Table with columns: Dollar Crossrates (US), Last, Change. Includes Pound, Yen, etc.

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Includes VW Corp, IBM, etc.

Table with columns: US Commodities, Last, Change. Includes Cocoa, Coffee, etc.

Table with columns: London Commodities, Last, Change. Includes Cocoa, Coffee, etc.

Table with columns: Spot Market Metals (US), Last, Change. Includes Silver, Gold, etc.

Table with columns: New York Metal Futures, Last, Change. Includes Gold, Silver, etc.

Table with columns: London Metal Fixes, Last, Change. Includes Gold, Silver, etc.

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Includes Allied Domecq, BT, etc.

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Includes Allianz AG, SAP, etc.

Tel Aviv

Israeli stocks were little changed as investors expressed concern about Asia's economy and joblessness at home...

The Maof Index of 25 stocks rose 0.06 percent to 296.72. The Mishtanin Index of 100 stocks eased 0.01% to 284.09...

STOCKS

Maof 296.72 ▲ 0.06%
Dow Jones 7976 ▲ 0.68%
FTSE 5203.3 ▲ 1.59%
Nikkei 15985.21 ▲ 0.48%

Asia

Japanese stocks rose, led by banks and brokers, amid optimism a ruling Liberal Democratic Party bailout package will pump trillions of yen into the country's ailing financial companies...

Europe

UK stocks rose amid optimism the global economy isn't overheating and policy makers won't raise interest rates anytime soon...

Wall Street

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stocks flew higher for the second straight session yesterday as investors loaded up on some of the recently battered technology shares...

Mark declines on signs of German weakness

The dollar rose against the mark as German wholesale prices fell more than expected. Wholesale prices fell 0.7 percent last month, compared with expectations for a 0.3% fall...

CURRENCIES

Dollar 3.542 ▲ 0.11%
Basket 3.7921 ▲ 0.02%
Mark 1.988 ▼ 0.18%
Sterling 5.7768 ▼ 0.27%

Others

Coffee rose amid concern frost in Mexico over the weekend damaged crops for harvest next year...

Platinum down as Russia increases supply

Platinum slumped as Russian supplies increase at a time of growing concern about the Asian financial crisis' impact on demand for the precious metal...

COMMODITIES

Gold \$285.35 ▲ 1.5%
Crude Oil \$17.17 ▼ 0.09%
CRB 234.92 ▼ 0.49%

Oil

Brent crude oil futures fell, even after the United Nations chief weapons inspector left Iraq without reaching an accord to access presidential palaces...

US bonds little changed as inflation tames

US bonds were little changed after a government report on consumer prices showed inflation remains subdued, suggesting the Federal Reserve will hold bank lending rates steady at a policy meeting...

BONDS

US 30-year T-bill yield 5.97 no change

Where to Go

Jerusalem
Conducted Tours
HEBREW UNIVERSITY, Tours of the Mount Scopus campus, in English...

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Table with columns: Currency (deposit for), 3 MONTHS, 6 MONTHS, 12 MONTHS. Includes US dollar, Pound sterling, etc.

Table with columns: Checks and Transfers, Buy, Sell, Banknotes, Buy, Sell, Rep. Rates. Includes US dollar, German mark, etc.

These rates vary according to bank. *Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

Tel Aviv shares data supplied by Pacific Mediterranean Investments, Tel. 09-958-5873. All other data supplied by Commstock Trading Ltd., Tel. 02-624-4963.

DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA ABA. Foreign financial data courtesy of Commstock Trading Ltd. 34 Ben Yehuda St., Jerusalem.

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Platinum slumped as Russian supplies increase at a time of growing concern about the Asian financial crisis' impact on demand for the precious metal...

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Handwritten text in Hebrew: אנו יעדינו

Windies beat India, meet England in final

SHARJAH (Reuters) - West Indies won a place in Friday's final of the Champions Trophy against England when they beat India by 41 runs in the final qualifying match yesterday.

India paid the price for their two earlier defeats which left them to score 230 off 45 overs to qualify on net run rate.

"The pressure got to us," their captain Sachin Tendulkar admitted after he had been hauled off the ground when he was run out.

"I don't blame the fans," he said. "After all we lost three matches here and they have their feelings." India lost their last nine wickets for 92 in 14 overs after opener Saurav Ganguly had scored 70 off 94

balls with five fours and a six. Strangely, for a team that has built its reputation on pace over the last 20 years, the West Indies stars were three spinners.

Carl Hooper took four for 37 with his off-spin, part-time leg spinner Chanderpaul collected three tall-order wickets and Ravi Lewis had the wicket of Navjot Sidhu as well as a hand in the run-outs of Tendulkar and Mohammad Azharuddin.

Stuart Williams, who scored 77 in the defeat of Pakistan and 22 as the West Indies lost to England, hit his first one-day international century with an unbeaten 105 off 149 balls with 10 fours to form the basis of the

West Indies score. He rarely took chances but his solid defence should have allowed the stroke makers to flourish.

Instead the Indian attack, boosted by the introduction of pacerman Venkatesh Prasad, caught a tight rein on all the batsmen.

Off-spinner Rajesh Chauhan had the important wicket of Brian Lara in the over after he had threatened mayhem with 14 runs off the bowling of Anil Kumble.

Lara greeted leg-spinner Kumble by hitting two fours and a six off his first over. But in the following over he was caught by Kumble off Chauhan for 23.

Bet. Jerusalem, Mac. TA reach Toto Cup final

By ORI LEWIS

The Toto Cup final next week will sport two of the most important club names in local soccer, following yesterday's semi-final victories for Betar Jerusalem and Maccabi Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv beat Hapoel Kfar Sava 2-0 in the early game, and Betar overcame Hapoel Beit She'an 3-1 in extra time in the late fixture of the doubleheader held at the National Stadium in Ramat Gan.

Had the weather been warmer, the 3,000-odd spectators for the first game might have felt able to fall asleep, as league cellar-dwellers Maccabi Tel Aviv and mid-table Hapoel Kfar Sava gave them little reasons to concentrate on the action. But 20 minutes from the end, the game came to life as Maccabi went ahead when Avi Nimni latched onto a cross from the right from Ofer Levy to bury the ball from close range.

Seven minutes later, the result was settled when Sergei Gerasimov, a CSKA Moscow player on trial with Maccabi, beat Kfar Sava keeper Eran Seinzinger.

Betar recovered from a 1-0 deficit to beat Beit She'an in extra time and won 3-1. The Beit She'anis were given some hope when their Georgian midfielder, Gala Panchulidze, put them ahead with 25 minutes gone, but the Jerusalemis hit back through Nir Sivilia, who leveled on the stroke of halftime after being set up by Itshak Pishont.

Only in extra time did the crowd, which by now had swelled to 6,000, begin to get Betar pulp ahead. Shai Holtzman proved his value with a goal in the 104th minute, and Pishont himself sealed the score line in the dying seconds of the match.

Betar Jerusalem and Maccabi Tel Aviv will contest the final at the National Stadium next Tuesday afternoon.

SPORTS in brief

'Post' trophy goes to Ramat Hasharon quartet

The final round of the Annual Max Spitz Charity Day was played off at Ramat Gan with players from all of Israel's nine clubs competing for *The Jerusalem Post* Trophy.

In a mixed four competition, the Ramat Hasharon team of Josh Eckstein, Herzel Dunsky, Jaffa Lavine and Paula Kaplan took the trophy with a 25 shot difference, narrowly edging out Arye Keren's Ramat Gan team by two shots.

In fitting words, Jack Rabin, a past president of the National Bowling Association referred to the sole uniting efforts of former South African Max Spitz who brought the game to Israel in the early 1950's and served as national president for 30 years. Proceeds of over NIS4,000 raised at the competition, which was inaugurated in 1984, will go to the Jerusalem Post Toy Fund, the Foresake Me Not Fund, and the Welcome Home Fund. *Norman Spiro*

Amsterdam, Paris, Stockholm to stage cup finals

GENEVA (Reuters) - Amsterdam will host the European Cup final on May 20, Europe's governing body UEFA said yesterday.

But the Dutch will have to work out conflicting commercial obligations within the next 10 days before receiving final approval. UEFA said.

The governing body also announced that the UEFA Cup final, which will be a one-match contest for the first time this season, will be played on May 6 at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. The Cup Winners' Cup, set for May 13, will be played at Stockholm's Rasunda stadium. The Super Cup final will be contested in Monaco on August 28, UEFA said.

Former Chelsea midfielder Hudson 'critical'

LONDON (Reuters) - Former England international Alan Hudson was said to be in a "critical condition" by a hospital spokesman after undergoing a 14-hour emergency operation yesterday.

Hudson, who played for Chelsea, Arsenal and Stoke, was involved in a car accident on Monday evening while walking home in London. He was admitted to the Royal London Hospital with internal and head injuries.

His son Alan junior said the family had been prepared for the worst but the signs were now more hopeful.

Dean Smith honored by 'Sports Illustrated'

CHAPEL HILL, NC (Reuters) - Dean Smith, who ended his 36-year coaching career at North Carolina with the most wins in college basketball history, was named Sportsman of the Year Tuesday by *Sports Illustrated* magazine.

Smith became the fourth coach to receive the honor, awarded annually since 1954, joining John Wooden (1972), Joe Paterno (1986) and Don Shula (1993).

Smith finished with 879 coaching victories, surpassing the 876 total amassed by Adolph Rupp of Kentucky fame. He notched 65 NCAA tournament victories - more than any other coach - from a record 27 appearances in the post-season championship.

Holloake set to lead England in Caribbean one-dayers

SHARJAH (Reuters) - Adagio Holloake, who has led England's cricketers to the final of the Champions Trophy, is expected to be named as captain for the one-day series in West Indies next year, sources close to the camp said yesterday.

England coach David Lloyd has said that the "core of the team playing here" will make up the one-day side in the Caribbean when five one-day matches will be played in March and April following the Test series. "There will be an announcement soon, or rather a late, probably next week," Lloyd said.

The position of captain for the one-day games was left vacant when the squad for West Indies was named in September. Mike Atherton, who is not in Sharjah, will captain the Test team.

It was intended that Champions Cup would be a trial for Holloake and he has passed with flying colors as England have won all three of their matches on the way to clinching a place in the final.

"What has impressed me has been his spirit shown by the side," said Lloyd. "They have been a team's captain and that's a great start. Holloake has been the right man for the job here." Lloyd singled out Matthew Fienberg, the 33-year-old Kent all-rounder, for special praise. "He might be a bit older than the rest but that has never been a factor as far as I am concerned," said the coach. "He has been on the fringe of selection ever since I took charge 18 months ago and he bowls every ball as if his life depends on the outcome."

Warne upset over weight question

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Australia leg-spinner Shane Warne, showing signs of sensitivity about his weight, stormed out during a publicity appearance yesterday after being asked about his growing waistline.

Warne was attending the unveiling of a waxwork of himself in Melbourne when a question about the model's noticeably slimmer appearance visibly upset him.

Warne snapped: "That's why I don't answer any questions from you blokes." As he walked from the stage, ending a very brief and abruptly curtailed appearance. According to recent local newspaper reports, Australia coach Geoff Marsh has become concerned about Warne's weight, asking the bowler to monitor his diet.

Sydney's *Sunday Telegraph* said Warne was more than six kilograms above his ideal match weight.

Brazil eliminate Mexico from Confederations' Cup

RIYADH (Reuters) - Brazil ended Mexico's slim hopes of a Confederations' Cup semifinal place with a 3-2 win yesterday.

The result left Brazil finish top of group A with Australia second, despite losing 1-0 earlier to Saudi Arabia. The two go through to Friday's semifinals.

Mexico needed a draw to qualify and played a defensive game for the first 40 minutes when Pavel Pardo brought down Falvio Conceicao and Romario converted the resultant penalty.

A more attacking approach enabled Luis Hernandez to set up an equaliser after 52 minutes. Cuauhtemoc Blanco tapped home.

But Brazil regained the advantage when Mexican defender Francisco Gabriel missed a loose

ball in his own penalty area and Denilson snapped it up to score on 58 minutes.

Defender Junior Baiano added a third after a storming run, cutting inside and hammering home from a tight angle eight minutes later.

Mexico gave themselves a glimmer of hope in the final minute when substitute Ramon Ramirez curled a free-kick around the Brazilian wall and past stationary goalkeeper Rogerio.

But they ran out of time in their quest to jump above the Australians in the standings on goal difference.

Referee Ian McLeod of South Africa was substituted at halftime after injuring his jaw bumping into the back of a Mexican player. He was taken to hospital and replaced by Un Prasert Pirom of Thailand.

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The Beeb: Caught offside

BBC Television hosted its annual Sports Review of the Year on Sunday evening - and in many ways the occasion, once again proved to be a reflection of the broadcaster's unique position in British sport. Trouble is, the rather disjointed, frayed at the edges, dowdy presentation was probably not the exact image 'the Beeb' had in mind.

But sadly, in the 1990s as far as televised sport is concerned, the BBC is in danger of being left behind - or picking up the crumbs from the rich man's table.

LONDON CALLING

The evening followed its usual pattern - introduced by Desmond Lynam, doyen of British sports broadcasting and casting a reflective eye, sport by sport, over the past 12 months - little has changed over the 40 plus years the occasion has been aired.

But the world of televised sport has changed - and it shows. Whereas in the past, the BBC could delight in showing clip after clip from its own vast bank of action accumulated over the previous year, whatever the sport, these days snatched images of the best action are now flashed on screen accompanied by the grating words "Courtesy of Sky Sports" or "Courtesy of ITV".

The trend reached its nadir on Sunday evening when to illustrate the Tyson-Holyfield fight when Mad Mike bit off his part of his opponent's ear - surely one of the stories of the year - the BBC was reduced to showing grainy still images. Presumably not enough money had exchanged hands for even a snatch of this event to be shown to the BBC's viewers.

The debate about the BBC and televised sport is one which will keep many a barroom amused for hours. For years the BBC, along with independent commercial broadcaster ITV, was the only option for sports bodies to sell their rights to. Consequently, football, cricket, snooker, boxing and tennis were all covered by the so-called terrestrial channels.

When Rupert Murdoch launched Sky Television in the late 1980s, he realized two things would sell his subscription packages - films and sport.

The conventional broadcaster, used to being the only card players at the poker table when it came to buying rights from sports bodies, suddenly they found that the Aussie card shark had a bigger pot to play with, some pretty fancy tricks up his sleeve, and, most importantly for a poker player, he wouldn't blink when the going got tough.

The "big two," knowing they were the only option, had consistently kept a lid on the price of paying for broadcast rights. As a consequence when Murdoch came along offering megabucks to switch to his channels, the sports bodies jumped.

Overseas England cricket tours, world championship boxing, the Premier League, England's soccer internationals,

the Five Nations rugby union internationals - all live broadcasting of these events is now on Sky.

Murdoch gambled heavily on sport, turning his loss-making channels into a winner and it worked big-time. With a monthly subscription approaching £30 a month and thousands signing up every month to see this glittering package of top flight sport, the cash is rolling in.

The broadcaster, of course, could only jump if they were allowed to. The government has in force a list of events which cannot be sold to the highest bidder and must be accessible by the general public on terrestrial television.

They include the Grand National, Wimbledon and England's home Test matches. But, interestingly enough, the England and Wales Cricket Board is now crying foul that it is not making enough money for the development of the game because of the relatively low price it gets for its live rights.

The government has now set up a committee of experts - including sporting luminaries such as the former athlete Steve Cram and the ex-soccer star and manager Jack Charlton - to advise it on whether more or less events should be on this list and in what form.

The BBC, a unique public service broadcaster, has found itself hung by its own uniqueness. Funded entirely by the license fee - around £100 a year - it supports two television channels, five national radio stations, dozens of local television and radio outfits, plus the World Service. It doesn't take a genius - just an accountant - to work out that once they are paid for, the amount budgeted for live sports rights looks rather sickly when compared with Murdoch's cash pile.

Debate now centers on whether the BBC should even attempt to compete with big bidders - or withdraw gracefully from the game. It has even found itself losing out to its more well-heeled rival ITV, which for example, has plucked Formula 1 motor racing and the rights to live FA Cup soccer matches from under its nose.

To many, the only solution is for the BBC to play Murdoch and the rest at their own game. One argument is that a £5-£10 premium should be added to the license for all those who wish to view sport on the BBC. This would then supposedly beef up the war chest when it comes to bidding.

It's a nice thought, but doesn't sound practical. In the end, it may be politicians who decide this. If the government comes down hard on many people being denied live sport - and the majority still don't subscribe to satellite - then the field may open up again.

The question is - with the BBC already providing a relatively diminished output when compared to its heyday of the 1960s and 1970s - will it be ready to take advantage?

Mercer's 20 sparks Celtics past 76ers

Wizards on a roll at new arena; Jordan hits 31 in Bulls' win over Suns

BOSTON (AP) — Ron Mercer, left out of the starting lineup because of a slump, scored 20 points as the Boston Celtics beat the Philadelphia 76ers 100-83 Monday night.

Philadelphia played without star guard Allen Iverson, who was serving a one-game suspension for missing a practice.

Mercer scored 10 points during the decisive third quarter, when the Celtics broke the game open with a 22-5 run.

Jerry Stackhouse led Philadelphia with 25 points.

Pacers 108, Raptors 101

Reggie Miller scored 22 points, and reserve Jason Rose had 15 points and seven assists as visiting Indiana continued its domination over Toronto.

Indiana, which is 10-0 against the Raptors, has won three straight overall and nine of its last 11.

Marcus Camby scored a season-high 28 points for Toronto, which fell to 2-21 with its 10th straight home loss.

Wizards 88, Jazz 86

Juwan Howard scored 21 points as Washington remained unbeaten at its new arena.

The Wizards blew an 11-point fourth-quarter lead before recovering for their fifth straight victory at the MCI Center.

Washington snapped a three-game losing streak and improved to 8-0 against Western Conference teams.

Karl Malone scored 26 points for the Jazz, who are in a mid slump, having lost three straight road games.

Bulls 111, Suns 104

Michael Jordan scored 31 points, Dennis Rodman grabbed 21 rebounds and Chicago used a big second quarter to win at home.

Toni Kukoc scored 23 points for the Bulls and Jason Caffey added 18 points and 10 rebounds, both season highs, before fouling out.

Antonio McDyess scored a season-high 23 points for the Suns before fouling out with 7:55 left. Cedric Ceballos added a season-high 22.

Hawks 99, Trail Blazers 90

Tyrone Corbin scored a season-high 19 points and Christian Laettner added 19 points and 13 rebounds as visiting Atlanta won its third straight game.

Reserve Ed Gray added 16 points for the Hawks, who were playing their fourth road game in five nights. Gray took over at



BULLISH BEHAVIOR — The Bulls' Dennis Rodman fights for a rebound against the Suns' Antonio McDyess during first-quarter play. Chicago won 111-104.

point guard in the second quarter for the slumping Mookie Blaylock, who managed to score only eight points on 3-of-12 shooting.

Kenny Anderson scored 20 points and Rasheed Wallace added 16 for the Blazers.

No more All-Star slam dunk contest

NEW YORK (AP) — The dunk contest was often slammed in recent years. Critics said all the good dunks had already been done and lamented the lack of participation from the league's best players.

"The NBA, wary of an event gone stale, has decided to do away with it. For the first time since 1983, All-Star Weekend will be held without a dunk contest."

"I think it was getting to be monotonous, and maybe it's good to do something different," Charles Barkley said. "It was the slam dunk over and over. Nobody got excited about it because they had seen it before."

The dunk contest will be replaced by an event called "2-ball" that will team one NBA and one Women's NBA player from the same city in a shooting contest in which points are awarded on a sliding scale for shots taken from different spots on the court over a span of 60 seconds. The further the shot, the more points.

NBA box scores

Team	Score	Opponent	Score
Philadelphia	83	Boston	100
Washington	88	Jazz	86
Indiana	108	Raptors	101
Chicago	111	Suns	104
Atlanta	99	Trail Blazers	90

EASTERN CONFERENCE			
Team	W	L	Pct.
Atlanta	15	6	.714
Charlotte	11	10	.524
Chicago	11	10	.524
Indiana	10	11	.476
Los Angeles	10	11	.476
Memphis	10	11	.476
Philadelphia	4	15	.266
Portland	10	11	.476
San Antonio	10	11	.476
Toronto	2	21	.087

Canucks end 5-game skid with shutout win over Kings

VANCOUVER (AP) — Pavel Bure recorded his third hat trick this season and Arurs Irbe earned a shutout as the Vancouver Canucks ended a five-game losing streak with a 7-0 win over the Los Angeles Kings on Monday night.

Bure, who leads the Canucks with 21 goals, capped off his ninth career three-goal game late in the second period with a rare Vancouver power-play goal.

The Canucks scored their first power-play goal in 31 opportunities on home ice when Bure took a pass from Mark Messier at the Kings' blue line, split the defense and slid the puck past Frederic Chabot to give Vancouver a 5-0 lead. Messier had three assists.

Los Angeles is winless in its last six games (0-5-1).

Flyers 3, Canadiens 1

Vaclav Prospal and Eric Lindros scored power-play goals in the first period, leading Philadelphia to an away win.

The game included a six-man brawl in the second period that resulted in 112 penalty minutes, four game misconducts and left the Canadiens with four defensemen.

Trent Klatt scored Philadelphia's third goal while Mark Recchi scored on a first-period power play for Montreal.

Lindros's goal stood up as the game-winner as the Flyers won their fourth game in five nights. Philadelphia goalie Garth Snow

stopped 20 of 21 shots, including a key glove save of Vincent Damphousse in the closing minutes.

Bruins 6, Panthers 2

Steve Heinze scored a goal and added an assist as visiting Boston won its fifth straight game.

Heinze has five goals and four assists in his last five games.

The Bruins averaged a 10-5 loss to the Panthers on November 26 at the Miami Arena by outshooting the Panthers 40-28. Ted Donato and Dmitri Khristich also each had a goal and an assist for Boston.

Boston goaltender Byron Dafoe won for the fourth straight time, stopping 26 shots.

Senators 3, Blues 1

Alexei Yastin scored twice and Shawn McEachern assisted on all three visiting Ottawa goals.

The Blues, who lead the league in points at home with 28 and are tied for first with 13 home wins, have now lost consecutive games at the Kiel Center. With the win, Ottawa moved one game over .500 (6-5-3) on the road.

Chris Phillips had Ottawa's other goal and goalie Ron Tugnutt made 25 saves. Rudy Poeschek scored his first goal for the Blues.

Stars 8, Sabres 4

Darryl Sydor and Jamie Langenbrunner scored two goals apiece as host Dallas ended a recent scoring drought.

Sergei Zubov matched his career-high with four assists and

Joe Nieuwendyk, Greg Adams and Pat Verbeek all had a goal and an assist for the Stars, who had been shut out in two of their previous three games.

Avalanche 3, Maple Leafs 2

Peter Forsberg and Rene Corbet scored goals 21 seconds apart in the second period as Colorado won at home.

Eric Messier added a goal in Colorado's three-goal second period and Joe Sakic had two assists for the Avalanche, winners of seven of their last 11 (7-2-2).

Florida 3, Panthers 1

Florida's first period was a 1-0-0. Second period—Florida, Sheppard 8 (Washburn, Melanby), 8:19 (pp), 2. Boston, Watson 9 (Gourde, Carter), 12:22 (pp), 3. Boston, Victor 7 (Gonzo, Allison), 14:28. Second period—Florida, Taylor 10 (Bourque), 4:22. Boston, Sullivan 2 (Anseloni), 18:17. Third period—Florida, Nieuwendyk 7 (Lauri), 2:25 (pp), 8. Boston, McLarnan 3 (Carter, Khristich), 18:13. Goals—Florida, Florida, Washburn, Carter, Filipchuk. A—14,705.

Philadelphia 2 0 1-3

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	22	9	0	44	94	53
Philadelphia	19	9	4	41	97	76
Washington	15	12	4	36	99	91
N.Y. Islanders	13	15	4	30	87	87
N.Y. Rangers	9	14	11	29	87	95
Tampa Bay	6	21	4	16	57	102

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	18	6	4	42	95	80
Pittsburgh	19	8	4	41	93	88
Montreal	16	12	3	37	84	84
Ottawa	14	15	4	32	83	78
Carolina	12	16	3	29	87	94
Buffalo	10	15	6	26	80	89

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	22	9	4	48	114	75
San Jose	19	8	4	41	110	80
St. Louis	20	12	3	43	109	81
Phoenix	13	14	4	32	88	92
Chicago	10	16	6	26	89	92
Toronto	10	16	5	25	87	84

Peyton Manning has knee infection

KNOXVILLE (Reuters) — Two days after the disappointment of not winning the Heisman Trophy, Tennessee quarterback Peyton Manning has been hospitalized due to an infection in his right knee and will miss several days of practice for the Orange Bowl.

Manning, who was second to Michigan cornerback Charles Woodson in the Heisman voting announced in New York on Saturday night, was hospitalized Monday, his school announced. He is expected to remain in the hospital two or three days.

Manning will receive bedrest, intravenous antibiotic treatment of the infection, which developed because of the ruptured bursa in his right

knee, and physical therapy.

"Because of this condition, it is not likely Peyton will practice, at least to full degree, before the team breaks for Christmas December 22nd," said Tennessee head trainer Mike Kolb. "The infection developed as the swelling from his knee migrated into his lower leg and ankle."

Manning will conclude his stellar collegiate career on January 2 in the Orange Bowl, when third-ranked Tennessee takes on second-ranked Nebraska in the final game for Cornhuskers coach Tom Osborne.

The team will commence practices for the Orange Bowl tomorrow, after final exams.

Red Sox accused of lax investigation of racial harassment

BOSTON (AP) — A black former executive of the Boston Red Sox has accused the team of not investigating thoroughly the racial harassment he said he was subjected to while he was working for the baseball team.

Thomas Sneed, 25, who worked for the Red Sox for seven years before leaving last September for a job with Bell Atlantic Corp., filed a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

E. Holmer, a nanny from Sweden whose mutilated body was found in a dumpster in the Fenway section last year.

Sneed said he interpreted that as a threat of physical violence.

He said team officials told him to keep quiet about the allegations of harassment, and urged him not to tell his fiancée.

He also said the team took no action against a female employee officials said had a history of harassing others on the job, and was believed to be responsible for the acts against him. The employee was not identified in the complaint.

The Red Sox on Monday night denied naming any employees as a suspect.

"Mr. Sneed's allegations that the club's investigation was halfhearted or less than thorough and

fair to all concerned are incorrect," the Red Sox said in a statement.

"The Red Sox vigorously pursued every lead, including all of those suggested by Mr. Sneed, and will continue to do so until the person or persons involved are identified," the team said.

Sneed said he had met with John Harrington, chief executive officer of the Red Sox, and John Buckley, vice president, without results.

Sneed first was hired by the club as a part-time security guard while he was going to Northeastern University. He became sales manager of the team's "600 Club," managing, he said, annual sales of approximately \$10 million.

He said he has received letters containing racial slurs since resigning from the team.

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Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

All six acquitted in Senna death trial

IMOLA, Italy (Reuters) - An Italian court yesterday acquitted Formula One team chief Frank Williams and five other defendants of manslaughter in a trial over the death of Brazilian racing driver Ayrton Senna in 1994.

None of the defendants was in the makeshift courtroom near the Imola circuit in northern Italy where Senna, one of Formula One's most thrilling champions, died in the San Marino Grand Prix on May 1, 1994.

But their legal teams smiled and congratulated each other when Judge Antonio Costanzo read the verdict. Italian law does not require defendants to attend a final hearing.

The five others charged were Williams team technical director Patrick Head, former chief designer Adrian Newey, Belgian race director Roland Brunynsraede, Imola track director Federico Bendinelli and former track official Giorgio Poggi.

"Williams Grand Prix Engineering is pleased to confirm that Frank Williams, Patrick Head and Adrian Newey have been acquitted of all charges which were the subject of the Imola trial," the team said in a statement issued in London.

Last month prosecuting magistrate Maurizio Passarini made a dramatic about-turn when he asked for manslaughter charges against Williams and the three track officials to be shelved.

He said Williams, one of the most successful team directors in racing history, should be let off "for not having committed the offence." Senna had been driving a Williams car when he crashed at 220 kph.

Passarini asked for one-year suspended sentences for Head and Newey, saying their error had been "microscopic." But Costanzo decided to free all six men. The reasons for his decision will be published in 90 days, court officials said.

Under Italian law both the defence and prosecution can appeal a verdict. "Clearly we would hope that this matter will not be pursued any further," the Williams statement said.

Senna, three times world champion, died after his Williams' car hurtled off the track at 220 kph on the seventh lap of the race and slammed into a concrete wall. He suffered severe head injuries and died a few hours later. A life-sized bronze statue now marks the spot.

The trial began in February and the prosecution alleged a poor weld on Senna's steering column snapped as the Brazilian ace entered the notorious Tamborello curve, causing him to lose control of his car.

It was also alleged by the prosecution that the way the track was maintained could have contributed to the accident.

Both allegations were denied by the defendants.

Senna died 24 hours after Austrian Roland Ratzenberger crashed in practice at Imola and was killed. They were the first race deaths in formula one for 12 years.

Motor racing's ruling body, the FIA, said it would study the verdict before commenting.

"The FIA has noted today's decision of the Imola court, but will not comment until it has examined the full text of the decision and studied its implications," it said in a statement.

Team chief Williams told the trial in October that his company did not believe that Senna's steering column broke.

In the weeks leading up to the fateful San Marino race, Senna's steering column was cut, expanded and re-welded to satisfy his demand for more space inside the cockpit.

Williams acknowledged to the court that Senna's car had been hard to handle and difficult to drive. But speaking to reporters after giving evidence in October, he said: "We'll probably never know what happened."

Rice sparkles in 49ers' triumph

But wide receiver reinjures knee, may miss playoffs

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Jerry Rice completed a remarkable return from a severe knee injury. Then, with his rebuilt leg aching, he watched the San Francisco 49ers' defense torment John Elway.

Rice, flashing his old form in the first half in an early return from knee surgery, beat double coverage to make a lunging touchdown catch in the 49ers' 34-17 win over Denver on Monday night.

He didn't play in the second half and afterward avoided reporters, but 49ers general manager Dwight Clark said Rice had suffered an injury to his knee unrelated to the previous injury and would undergo an MRI scan.

"We're going to do some imaging tomorrow and see if we can figure out exactly what it is," Clark said.

But two hours after the game it was reported that team sources said Rice has a cracked bone in the left knee and would probably miss all of the playoffs.

Unlike the August 31 season opener, when Rice agonized on the Tampa Bay turf with a shredded left knee, Rice bounced back up after taking a hard hit in the end zone from Steve Atwater after the second-quarter scoring catch.

"Was that fun or what?" San Francisco coach Steve Mariucci said, downplaying a bruise Rice suffered to his repaired knee on the touchdown catch. "He banged his knee in the ground. It's stable. It swelled just like after a week of practice. There's no real concern."

The defense took over in the second half, capitalizing on a disastrous outing by Elway, who had two interceptions and a fumble leading to 17 San Francisco points. He completed only 16 of 41 passes for 150 yards.

"They're not a blitzing team but they were tonight," Elway said. "You've got to be able to adjust to it. Tonight, I just made too many mistakes throwing the ball."

Merton Hanks' 55-yard interception return for a touchdown broke a 17-all tie in the third quarter. Lee Woodall's 55-yard interception return set up Gary Anderson's second field goal and Kevin Greene sacked Elway, forcing a fumble that he returned 40 yards for the final score.

The win, on a night Joe Montana's No. 16 was retired by the 49ers, clinched home field in the National Conference playoffs for San Francisco (13-2) and also gave Kansas City the home field over Denver (11-4) in the American Conference.

"It seems like two seasons, maybe three," Young said. "Now we just have to get everyone healthy."

Denver, which lost Terrell Davis to a separated right shoulder in the first half, lost its second straight and heads into the playoffs as a wild card.

"I tried to walk it off and stay in and play, but my arm felt like it was falling off," Davis said. "It was just dangling there in the socket."

Rice's touchdown proved to be his last play. He spent the rest of the second quarter talking with team physician Michael Dillingham, who operated on Rice the day after the injury. Rice watched the second half from the sidelines with a bandage around what the 49ers said was a bruise to his surgically repaired knee.

Rice, who had three catches for



BACK IN THE SADDLE - Forty-niners WR Jerry Rice catches a second-quarter pass from QB Steve Young while being tackled by Broncos' cornerback Ray Crockett.

40 yards, was greeted by a wild ovation when he ran onto the field during pre-game introductions and another rousing cheer when he entered as the third receiver on the third play of the game.

"I wanted to get him the ball as quickly as possible," Young said. On San Francisco's second offensive series, he caught a 16-yard pass from Young and then made a diving

10-yard catch during the 92-yard march that Young finished by threading a 14-yard pass to Rice. He made the catch between Atwater and Darrien Gordon for San Francisco's first TD with 6:53 left in the second quarter.

"We all knew he would do it after watching him practice all week," linebacker Gary Plummer said. "That first play he lined up

was a huge emotional lift for us." The score was Rice's 166th career NFL record, and gave him 1,000 points for his career, the first non-kicker to reach that milestone. But Rice took a hard hit from Atwater and landed on his left knee.

He headed to the sidelines favoring the knee slightly. With Rice on the sideline, Terry

Kirby scored from a yard out with 22 seconds left in the second quarter and San Francisco went in front 14-10 at halftime.

Vaughn Hebron, playing in place of the injured Davis, took a pitch and cut back across the field for a 46-yard gain to the San Francisco 4.

He scored on a fourth-down run from the 1, giving Denver a 17-14 lead.

Denver scored the game's first 10 points, getting a 4-yard scoring run from Davis two plays after Ilesayi Uwaezoke muffed a punt that was recovered at the San Francisco 6.

San Francisco retires Montana's No. 16

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In the wild cheers of an adoring crowd and the sparkling flashes of hundreds of cameras, Joe Montana returned once more to the windswept field of San Francisco Bay as the 49ers retired his No. 16 jersey Monday night.

Introduced by former coach Bill Walsh, the man who drafted and developed him, Montana was clearly impressed by the reception.

"Back in 1979 when I first stepped on the field, I never imagined I'd be in this position tonight having my number retired," Montana said.

Broadcaster Al Michaels introduced a retrospective of Montana's career, calling the quarterback a "Bay Area icon and a man who has come to embody the 49ers franchise."

Eddie DeBarro, who was the managing owner of the team for 20 years until two weeks ago when he stepped down to face allegations of gambling, based in Louisiana, also praised Montana. But first he got his own cheers, pausing several times in his speech because of the cheers for him.

"This man has etched his place in NFL history as the greatest quarterback who has ever played the

game," DeBarro said. "I've never seen a man who has been so loved and respected by his fans as Joe Montana. He's a true icon of our sport."

San Francisco's third straight game was a home win. Montana led the 49ers to a 34-17 victory over the Denver Broncos Monday night.

Montana's career record stands at 200-100-10. He has won three Super Bowls and has been named MVP of the NFL three times.

Montana was drafted by the 49ers in 1979 and played for them until 1994. He was traded to the Oakland Raiders in 1995 and then to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1996.

Montana's career statistics include 200 wins, 100 losses, and 10 ties. He has thrown 4,000 passes for 40,000 yards and 200 touchdowns.

Montana's number 16 jersey will be retired by the 49ers on Monday night. It will be the 10th number to be retired by the team.

Marlins' dismantling continues as Kevin Brown traded to Padres

MIAMI (Reuters) — The Florida Marlins shipped star pitcher Kevin Brown to the San Diego Padres Monday, continuing to dismantle the team that won the World Series this year.

Brown, whose earned run average of 2.26 over the past two seasons was the lowest in baseball, was sent to San Diego for three minor leaguers — first baseman Derek Lee, right-handed pitcher Rafael Medina and left-handed pitcher Steve Hoff.

Brown went 16-8 with a 2.69 ERA last season, a year in which he threw a no-hitter at San Francisco on June 10 and appeared in his third All-Star Game. He won both of his starts against Atlanta in the National League Championship Series but lost twice in the World Series to the Cleveland Indians.

Brown is the team's career leader in strikeouts (389), shutouts (five) and complete games (11). In 1996, he was 17-11 with a major-league best 1.89 ERA for Florida.

The Georgia native has a career record of 121-92 with a 3.42 ERA in 278 career games for Texas, Baltimore and Florida. He won a career-high 21 games for the Rangers in 1992.

The 32-year-old Brown becomes the ace of a Padre staff that ranked 13th in the National League last season with a 4.98 ERA.

The Marlins had actively been shopping Brown, and more than a dozen teams showed interest in the right-hander.

Brown is just the latest player who has been let go in the club's fire sale, following the departures of star outfielder Moises Alou, longtime Marlins first baseman Jeff Conine, closer Robb Nen and outfielder Devon White — all unloaded since the

67 countries apply to send 2,593 athletes to Nagano

NAGANO, Japan (Reuters) — A record 2,593 athletes from 67 countries are planning to compete in next February's Winter Olympics in Nagano, organizers said yesterday.

The US said it would send the most athletes — 207 — followed by host Japan with 166 and Switzerland with 163.

Bermuda, Brazil, Iran, Luxembourg and Uruguay plan to send one athlete each.

South Korea said it would send 47 athletes after announcing last week it was cutting back on the number because of the country's financial troubles.

The number of countries attending is equal to the record number of participating nations set at the Lillehammer Games four years ago. It also includes three countries which have never competed in the Winter Olympics before — Azerbaijan, Uruguay and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The record for a Winter Olympics of 1,801 competitors was set in Albertville in 1992.

The second highest number of athletes was 1,739 in Lillehammer.



CALIFORNIA HERE I COME - Marlins' ace hurler Kevin Brown is dealt to San Diego.

صناديق الادوية